



## Treading Water



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### Chapter 1 by Kendall

Rayen has seven dates planned as a part of her final farewell to her girlfriend of three years before seeing her off to New Mexico.

"Hey, Ma, where are my keys?"

"I don't know, honey, I saw them in the living room last."

Ray casually scanned the furniture and spotted her keys on the coffee table. She quickly retrieved them, fixed the visor of her hat at the back of her head, and started for the door.

"Rayen," her mother anxiously stopped her. "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the marina. Nick and Renee flew out to New Mexico this morning, so Kloe is all alone."

"Oh, okay. Well then tell her I say hi."

"Will do, Ma," Ray waves to her as she walks away down the beach.

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Palm Harbor Marina was always bustling in the mornings, as most Florida bay areas are. Ray followed the deck over the Montgomery's boat, and let herself in. It was poorly lit, and nearly empty, save a few boxes and folding chairs.

"Hey, Klo?" she waited for an answer.

"Rayen?" Kloe's voice was muffled from upstairs. As Ray slowly climbed up to the second floor, she appreciated the delicate rocking of the houseboat for the last of many times.

She gently pushed the door open and the morning light flooded her view. As she blindly shuffled her way to the bed, Kloe was wrapped in her duvet, making it impossible to find her body.

"Hey, how're you holding up, baby?" Ray hung over the bed and gently placed her lips on Kloe's, being extra careful not to lose her balance.

A quiet whimper left Kloe's throat, and she skillfully trapped her girlfriend in her arms and pulled her onto the bed.

Ray slid her backpack off of her shoulders, and gave in to Kloe's persistent cry for cuddles.

"What are you doing here?" Kloe's question struck Ray as odd, taken that they only had one more week together.

Ray planted a slobbery kiss on her forehead and playfully shook her. "What do you mean 'what are you doing here'? I came to be with you. Your parents are gone and you are sad and lonely and I am here to save the day."

"I *am* sad and I *am* lonely," Kloe pouted into her pillows. Ray rolled over and unzipped her bag.

"And that is why," she propped herself up on one elbow, "I brought Ritz crackers and *Dirty Dancing*."

Kloe couldn't help but smile and laugh at how Ray brought her two favorite things when she was sad. She grabbed Ray's warm cheeks and pulled her in for another kiss.

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"I'm sorry. And thank you," Kloe said, her eyes closed. Ray smiled and wrapped her arms around the cuddly lump that was her girlfriend.

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"I love you, too. And I am determined not to let our last week go to waste, okay?"

"What do you mean?"

"I have a few dates planned for us. Seven, in fact. One for every day of the week, starting tomorrow."

Kloe's eyebrows creased, "Wait, but I have to finish packing the boat up. It's going to be a busy week and I have to say goodbye to every-"

Ray silenced her worries with another kiss. "Baby, I know. It's going to be hard, for the both of us. *But* we're done with school, the boat has been gutted, and we've got a week together. *One week*," she shook a finger in front of Kloe's night blue eyes. "I don't plan on missing a single day with you."

"What are we doing tomorrow?"

"I guess you'll just have to wait and find out."

~*Cue Swayze*~

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